
News Release

Bureau of Land Management, Spokane District
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For Immediate Release

BLM Holds Public Scoping Meetings for Vegetation Treatments on BLM Public Lands in Western U.S.

The Bureau of Land Management encourages the public to share ideas and opinions about vegetation treatments on public land it administers. The public may attend any of 19 public scoping meetings in 12 western states, Alaska, and the District of Columbia between January 22 and March 12 to learn more about development of the BLM's *EIS for Vegetation Treatments, Watersheds and Wildlife Habitats on Public Lands Administered by the BLM in the Western United States, Including Alaska*. The environmental impact statement (EIS) is scheduled to be completed by the summer of 2003.

The public comment period for this scoping period ends March 29, 2002. The public may give comment at the public scoping meetings or submit by mail or fax.

The BLM is undertaking this EIS to consolidate, update and evaluate vegetation treatments and methods of treatment. It will update and replace analyses contained in four existing vegetation treatment EISs the agency completed from 1986 to 1992. It will also analyze vegetation treatments on BLM-administered lands in Alaska that were not included in the earlier EISs.

The EIS is not intended to address specific agency management decisions developed under local land use plans. It will identify and analyze alternatives for treating more than 6 million acres of public land a year by using prescribed and managed natural fire, Integrated Weed Management, and hazardous fuels reduction. Methods could include, but are not limited to, mechanical, chemical, biological, cultural (such as goats or other animals, hand-pulling, etc.), and prescribed fire/fuels reduction.

This will not be a land use plan nor an amendment to land use plans, but will provide baseline cumulative impact assessments that local BLM offices can use as they work with local, state and national stakeholders to develop local plans throughout the western states and Alaska. Land use plans are documents comprised of management decisions for use of public lands.

The analysis area includes only surface estate public lands administered by the BLM in Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nevada, North and South Dakota, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

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Issues initially identified for analysis during the EIS process are:

1. Reduction and treatment of highly flammable forest and rangeland fuel (trees, brush and other plants that have accumulated), including mechanical treatments.
2. Noxious weed control activities.
3. Restoration of ecosystem processes.
4. Protection of cultural resources.
5. Health of watershed and vegetative communities.
6. Habitat improvement opportunities for threatened and endangered species, and sensitive and special status species.
7. New chemical formulations for herbicides that may be more environmentally favorable than those now being used.
8. Smoke management and air quality.
9. Emergency stabilization and rehabilitation of wildfire-affected landscapes.
10. Improvement of watersheds and water quality.

The EIS will also address human health risk assessments for a variety of chemical herbicides that have become available since the previous impact statements were written.

The BLM welcomes identification of additional issues and concerns by the public. A reasonable range of alternatives, including a No Action alternative, will be developed to respond to the issues identified at the outset of the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) process. Each alternative will outline solutions to the issues and concerns brought out through public scoping to develop reasonable approaches to vegetation treatments.

The BLM's interdisciplinary project team will coordinate closely with Tribal, local and state governments, in addition to working with the Western Governors Association, the National Association of Counties, and other groups.

To provide written comments, or to be placed on the mailing list, contact Brian Amme, Project Manager, BLM, P.O. Box 12000, Reno, NV 89520-0006. No Internet service for the BLM web page or e-mail contact with BLM employees is available, due to litigation against the Department of the Interior (DOI) regarding access to Indian Trust data or assets. Until the court order closing down Internet services is lifted, comments should be mailed to the address above or faxed to: (775) 861-6712. Comments will be available for public inspection at the BLM Nevada State Office, 1340 Financial Blvd., Reno, NV 89502.

People making comments may request confidentiality. If you wish your name and/or address withheld from public review or disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written or faxed comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. The BLM will not, however, consider anonymous comments. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be available for public inspection in their entirety.

The BLM, an agency of the U.S. Department of the Interior, manages more land — 262 million surface acres — than any other Federal agency. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), which gave the BLM its comprehensive mission to manage the public lands for a variety of uses so as to benefit present and future generations. The BLM accomplishes this by managing for such resources as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing and mineral development, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on the public lands. The BLM is statutorily responsible for the survey and title records of the public domain, private land claims, and Indian lands. Most of the country's BLM-managed public land is located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. These lands, once remote, now provide the growing communities of the West with open space that gives the region much of its character. The Bureau, which has a budget of \$1.8 billion and a workforce of about 9,000 employees, also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the Nation.

-30- (ATTACHMENT FOLLOWS)

Dates and locations for the BLM public scoping meetings follow. If two times are listed for a location, there will be two separate meetings.

Schedule of Scoping Meetings for EIS on Conservation and Restoration of BLM Public Lands in Western U.S.		
Date & Time	Locations	BLM Contact
January 22 6 - 9 p.m.	BLM Office Conference Room 345 E. Riverside Drive St. George, UT	Kim Leany (435) 688-3208
January 23 5 - 8 p.m.	Utah Dept. of Natural Resources Bldg. 1594 W. North Temple Salt Lake City, UT	Verlin Smith (801) 539-4055
January 24 2 - 5 p.m. or 6 - 9 p.m.	Grand Vista Hotel 2790 Crossroads Blvd Grand Junction, CO	Harley Metz (970) 244-3076
January 29 4 - 7 p.m.	Miles Community College - Room 106 2715 Dickinson Miles City, MT	Jody Weil (406) 896-5258
January 30 3 - 6 p.m.	Western Wyoming Community College Room 1003 2500 College Drive Rock Springs, WY	Lance Porter (307) 352-0252
January 31 4 - 7 p.m.	Elks Lodge 604 Coburn Avenue Worland, WY	Janine Terry (307) 347-5194
February 4 3 - 5 p.m. or 6 - 9 p.m.	Holiday Inn Crown Plaza 2532 W. Peoria Avenue Phoenix, AZ	Deborah Stevens (602) 417-9215
February 5 5 - 8 p.m.	Sacred Heart Parish Hall 507 East 4 th Street Alturas, CA	Jennifer Purvine (530) 233-7932
February 11 5 - 8 p.m.	U. S. Forest Service Helena National Forest Headquarters 2880 Skyway Drive Helena, MT (across from airport)	Jody Weil (406) 896-5258
February 13 6 - 9 p.m.	Vista Inn 2645 Airport Way Boise, ID	Barry Rose (208) 373-4014
February 14 6 - 9 p.m.	College of Southern Idaho 315 Falls Ave Shields Bldg, Room 117 Twin Falls, ID	Eddie Guerrero (208) 736-2355
February 19 4 - 7 p.m.	BLM-Nevada State Office 1340 Financial Blvd. Reno, NV	JoLynn Worley (775) 861-6515

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Date & Time	Locations	BLM Contact
February 21 2 - 5 p.m. or 6 - 9 p.m.	Hilton Garden Inn 3650 East Idaho Street Elko, NV	Mike Brown (775) 753-0200
February 25 6 - 9 p.m.	Holiday Inn Express - Neptune Room 1100 North California Socorro, NM	Margie Onstad (505) 838-1256
February 26 5 - 8 p.m.	Holiday Inn Select 801 Truxton Ave Bakersfield, CA	Stephen Larson (661) 391-6099
February 28 6 - 9 p.m.	Valley Library 12004 East Main Spokane, WA	Kathy Helm (509) 536-1252
March 4 6 - 9 p.m.	Days Inn City Center 1414 SW 6th Portland, OR	Chris Strebis (503) 808-6003
March 6 3 - 6 p.m.	Anchorage Field Office - BLM 6881 Abbott Loop Road Anchorage, AK	Gene Terland (907) 271-3344
March 12 9 a.m. - 12 noon	Washington Plaza Hotel Franklin Room 10 Thomas Circle (Massachusetts and 14th Street) Washington, D.C.	Sharon Wilson (202) 452-5130